

The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

www.TheAllergyClinic.com

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Newsletter

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HOUSE DUST MITE

As the weather gets colder, it's expected that more patients will experience the "sniffles" or other symptoms such as nasal congestion, cough, post nasal drip, itching, redness and watering of the eyes, sneezing, wheezing, and in some, increased skin rashes. However, the common cold may not always be the cause. During this time of the year, we tend to spend more time inside, where house dust mites (HDMs) are more prevalent. Considering house dust mite allergy is one of the most common causes of allergy in the United States, many may be experiencing allergy symptoms without even realizing their symptoms are due to dust mite exposure. Furthermore, as a perennial indoor allergen, house dust mites have no allergy season. And yet, winter is when house dust mite-sensitive patients may experience the worst of their symptoms. There are a few reasons why spending more time indoors during the colder months can exacerbate their symptoms:

- HDMs are difficult to get rid of, even when patients clean regularly
- Even at low concentrations, HDMs can trigger allergic reactions in some patients
- Nearly 4 out of 5 households in the United States contain detectable levels of HDMs
- Heating systems can stir up and circulate HDMs, even if they're not alive, which can worsen symptoms

How To Reduce Dust Mites At Home

- **Use allergy-proof covers for the bedding:** Tightly woven allergy-proof bedding covers help prevent dust mites from getting into and accumulating in your pillows, mattresses and box springs. Allergy covers can also help prevent dust mites on your bedding. Avoid feather pillows. In fact, if a feather pillow is over 3 years old, 70% of the weight can be dust mite.
- **Regularly wash your bedding:** Wash your bedding once a week in hot water, at least 130 degrees F (60 degrees C). After you've washed your bedding, put them in the dryer and set to the hottest setting for at least 30 minutes. If your child has a favorite stuffed toy, wash it in hot water or place it in a Ziploc bag and seal the bag tightly. Store the bag in a freezer for at least 24 hours.
- **Reduce the humidity in your home:** Keep the humidity in your home below 50% to prevent dust mite reproduction. Air conditioners and dehumidifiers can help keep the humidity in your home low.
- **Filter the air in your home:** Dust mite allergens can easily enter the air, especially if you use fans. Use a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter (HEPA) to help remove dust allergens from the air. Clean the air filters regularly.
- **Vacuum rugs, carpets, upholstered furniture and other surfaces regularly:** It's a good idea to vacuum at least twice a week. Use a microfilter vacuum bag or a vacuum with a HEPA filter to help prevent dust mite allergens from escaping. If possible, remove rugs and carpets from your home. Consider wearing a mask while you're vacuuming.
- **Wipe down hard surfaces regularly:** Use a microfiber cloth or a wet cloth to wipe down surfaces. Use a Swiffer to wipe down non-carpeted floors.
- **PREVENTION:**

Make sure that you are getting your allergy shots/drops as scheduled. If you plan to travel for more than a week, we may need to make dosing adjustments.

We wish you and your family the best of the Holiday Season. May this upcoming year bring you and your family good health and happiness.

In observance of the Holiday Season, we will be closed:

Monday, December 26

Monday, January 2